



OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY
COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

KIMBERLY M. FOXX
STATE'S ATTORNEY

69 W. Washington | Suite 3200
Chicago, Illinois 60602

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 11, 2021

TO: Romel Murphy | Community Partner

FROM: Bernard D Headley II | Community Liaison

RE: Character Letter for Romel Murphy

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you today on behalf of one of our community partners, Mr. Romel Murphy. Its been just about 12 months since we met Romel and I must say...we are still as impressed with him now, as we were less than a year ago. His organization, Equality Should Be Normal, as been a true beacon on light within the Washington Park community. Through Romel's leadership he has been able to not only feed hundreds of people per week, but through several of his youth mentoring programs, he has been able to see students who may not have been given a chance, now go to college. What I am most impressed by Romel is acceptance of his background and use it to teach valuable lessons young people that attend his mentoring sessions.

I personally can attest that Mr. Murphy has never displayed anything that anyone would deem a threat to society or to anyone else. This young man has started a program that we hope in our Office continues to grow. If he is able to help keep young adults on the straight path to success through education, it will definitely have an impact on whether those young people ever see our Office. So we want to continue to support Romel in all his efforts.

Please if there is anything else I can offer to you, please don't hesitate to ask?

Sincerely,

Bernard D Headley II



Lori Lightfoot
Mayor

Department of Police • City of Chicago
3510 S. Michigan Avenue • Chicago, IL 60653

David T. Brown
Superintendent of Police

Romel Murphy Equality Should Be Normal
239 E 51st
Chicago, IL 60615
romel@equalityshouldbenormal.com

11 May 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I have had the honor to know Romel Murphy since the opening of Barbara Murphy Community Resource Center on 27 November 2020.

Romel Murphy's dedication to building community relationships have shown an immediate impact on the residents utilizes the center. The Barbara Murphy Community Center, under the leadership of Romel Murphy, supports many marginalize communities by providing food, workforce development, and mentoring and enrichment programs. The mentoring and enrichment program teaches life skills, conflict resolution, and goal setting that focus on strategies that can affect change in one's life.

Romel Murphy has organized volunteers to clean the community, feed the homeless, and supported families affected by the pandemic during COVID-19 by giving away holiday gift items for all ages on Christmas Day. He selflessly sacrificed celebrating the holiday with his family to put a smile on a little girl's face that lost her mother to gang violence. In addition, Romel has been an advocate to the community by strengthening community and policing relationships. He has assisted with local community organization initiatives, liaison with gang arbitration, and served as a critical role model in connecting youth to positive engagements.

Romel Murphy has become a community pillar, and I look forward to continuing working with him to make a better Chicago.

Respectfully,

Yolanda R. Walton

Yolanda Walton #1183
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"To promote justice and equality for all Black people in Chicago."

Lisa Marie Jackson
Media Relations Chair, Equality Should Be Normal
Tel. 312-529-0238
Email: media@equalityshouldbenormal.com

May 8, 2021

RE: Character Reference for Romel Murphy

To Whom It May Concern,

I have had the honor to know Romel since the Juneteenth Rally & Protest on June 19th, 2020. As a Volunteer Committee team member of Equality Should Be Normal, we have worked in the field together for approximately 10 months at community activations. We also became friends outside of work on a family level.

During the time I have known Romel, he has been honest, consistent, and trustworthy. He is always willing to go above and beyond what is expected of him to provide resources to the most underserved communities of Chicago. He is respectful and gets along well with everyone in the organization.

I recall several occasions in the lead up to ESNB becoming a 501c3 when Romel would spearhead countless conference calls in the heart of national unrest and a pandemic to fund over \$40,000 in community experiences. During the time we have worked together, I have witnessed him open the Barbara Murphy Community Center and continue to press forward so that equality in The Greater Chicago Area becomes normal.

I know Romel to be an exceptional leader, and I fully support all philanthropic endeavors he pursues. If any additional information is required concerning my association with Romel, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Marie Jackson
Lisa Marie Jackson

I'm Tyrone Crowe, resident of Indianapolis, Indiana. Father of 3, coach, government employee (leader of the mayor's constructional unit), and active member within my community.

In this world we live in there are very few people that you can rely on. Most individuals help others in return of a previous debt, future leverage, or internal satisfaction... well Romel Murphy is not "most individuals". He volunteers time, resources, and guidance to those in need. I myself have been blessed with his assistance over the years; whether it was materials for children, transportation on a dime's notice, or even aiding our wedding (that needed more help, than a blind man crossing the street).

Recently Romel has taken his efforts further than ever before on a national platform, starting with "Equality Should Be Normal". The program mentors Chicago's struggling minorities, their youth, and as well women throughout the inner city's poverty. Albeit Mr. Murphy has always had the heart for tribute, I believe that this is only the beginning to something this country needs now more than ever.

So from here on out, I hope that he's not visualized by his past gambling addiction or mistakes. I pray that he's viewed as a symbol of our future. The kind that sets trend throughout our communities that empowers the next person in the position to aid those without! This country needs more Romel Murphys!

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Executive Director Romel Murphy
Equality Should Be Normal
239 E 51st
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May 09, 2021

Learning Specialist Sushmitha Ram
DRW College Prep
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To Whom It May Concern,

It is an honor to share my gratitude and recognition to the Founder of *Equality Should Be Normal*, Romel Murphy. While this may not cover the extent to which Romel has impacted all of us, I will expand on how I was able to observe and receive the depth of his leadership both in my profession and within his organization's center, the Barbara Murphy Community Resource Center.

I first met Romel when investigating guest speakers for my classroom of 15+ high school seniors all from the South and West side of Chicago. Romel was prompt and direct and showcased he believed in empowering youth as he immediately set up a time months in advance to talk to my students about his leadership journey. During his 1hr session, students were surprised to see such a profound leader be genuine without hesitation. Romel sparked in each student's mind to rethink the way they thought about education, financial literacy, and neighborhood narratives as he eloquently discussed the ways in which media and systematic barriers have impacted marginalized communities. Even with challenging questions from students, Romel met them at their sociopolitical understandings and broadened their insight into gaining self and community awareness. Romel spoke with compassion, clarity, and cutting edge knowledge.

I was immediately impacted hearing Romel's work and I attended the first day of the Barbara Murphy Community Resource Center's opening as a volunteer. I was impressed at how Romel organized 50+ strangers into organized teams along with giving each of us the agency to implement our vision and change. When I impromptly asked him if I can provide support for community members to get financial resources, he immediately grabbed tables and space for me to get started. He had a clear delegation for those who needed direction and provided freedom for those with projects to join together in our multifaceted visions of social change to eradicate racism. He greeted each Bronzeville resident who attended the center with care and attention.

He never let anyone go with empty hands as he made sure his clients and volunteers were adequately supported.

He gave me belief that we each can make a difference and he wanted the Bronzeville community and beyond to thrive with high quality resources. Unlike many organizations I have attended in the past, Romel created a space for community members to receive holistic support in health, wellness, technological skills, financial literacy skills, and more for both youth and adults. To promise all of this with execution and implementation is no easy job; yet, Romel has done just that. Through his wide network, Romel has offered mental health counselors to the community along with providing 100+ groceries weekly ever since the pandemic. While this may take years for most organizations I have volunteered at to even just set up, Romel led and continues to innovate this vision within less than a year through strategic planning and collaboration.

Romel continues to offer his wisdom and strengths as he will be speaking in my 1.5 hour "Healing in Community Organizing" workshop in collaboration with 3 of the top Chicago BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) led non-profit organizations focused on radically changing the norms of the field. I appreciate how Romel communicates effectively and supports each of us to bring our strengths to the table.

Romel is the embodiment of imaginative, fearless leadership aiming to serve with excellence. Grounded in vulnerability and authenticity, Romel brings his whole self to his work and vision for each of us to share and speak our truths collectively as well as unapologetically. This is who we need for our society to radically change.

It has been an honor to reflect on Romel and continue to serve at his center to this day.

Warm regards,

Sushmitha Ram


Learning Specialist, High School Educator

DRW College Prep

5.0

22 reviews

5/10/21, 1:17 PM

 **Jessie Williams**
16 reviews · 8 photos


5 days ago · NEW

Love all the work that Romel and his team are doing in the community. Keep up the good work! We need more leaders like this in the world!!!

 Like

Response from the owner 5 days ago
Thank you

 Edit

 **Rhea Pitra**
5 reviews

5 days ago · NEW

Keep up the great work! Our world needs you...GOD BLESS EVERYTHING YOU DO!